

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01
SAJ-01 TRSE-00 /057 W

----- 122169 /20

R 140830Z DEC 76
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3049
INFO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
FBIS OKINAWA
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 14464

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PINR CH
SUBJECT: TENG'S RETURN CAUSING PROBLEMS?

REF: A) HONG KONG 14025 B) HONG KONG 13815 C) HONG KONG 12453

1. DESPITE INCREASING SIGNS THAT THE REHABILITATION OF TENG HSIAO-PING TO HIGH-LEVEL LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME (REFTELS), A NUMBER OF RECENT SIGNS COULD INDICATE RESISTANCE TO TENG'S RETURN OR AT LEAST QUESTIONING OF WHAT ROLE HE SHOULD PLAY IN THE NEW LEADERSHIP LINEUP, THE SOMEWHAT ANTI-CLIMATIC NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS MEETING (HK 14067) SUGGESTS THAT THERE MAY STILL BE SOME SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT WHO WILL FILL THE TOP LEADERSHIP POSTS (STATE 297515).

2. INDICATORS THAT TENG'S RETURN MAY NOT BE COMPLETELY WELCOME IN PEKING INCLUDE:

---WU TEH'S NOVEMBER 30 NPC SPEECH CALLING FOR A CONTINUATION OF THE CRITICISM OF TENG (HK 13956);

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---KWEICHOW'S DECEMBER 6 MASS RALLY CALL TO "CRITICIZE TENG

IN DEPTH;"

---KIANGSU'S NOVEMBER 3-24 REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE PLENUM EXHORTATION TO CONTINUE TO CRITICIZE TENG WHICH ALSO CALLED ON CADRES TO TAKE A "PROPER ATTITUDE" TOWARD CRITICISM OF TENG;

---TSINGHAI'S PARTY SECRETARIES' MEETING AND KIANGSU'S NOVEMBER 22-27 LEARNING FROM TACHING CONFERENCE LEGITIMIZED THE CAMPAIGN TO CRITICIZE TENG AS INITIATED BY MAO AND NOTED THAT COMRADE HUA HAD CARRIED OUT THESE INSTRUCTIONS PROPERLY AND MADE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CRITICISM TO BE CARRIED OUT. HUNAN'S PARTY PROPAGANDA CONFERENCE SIMPLY STATED THAT CRITICISM OF TENG MUST BE CONTINUED ACCORDING TO MAO'S INSTRUCTIONS.

3. CENTRAL INSTRUCTIONS WHICH FOLLOWED A RECENTLY CONCLUDED NATION-WIDE PROPAGANDA CONFERENCE APPARENTLY SET DOWN SPECIFIC WAYS TO HANDLE THE TENG CRITICISM CASE. THE INSTRUCTIONS CALL FOR A CONTINUATION OF CRITICISM OF TENG BUT WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF CHAIRMAN MAO'S ORIGINAL INTENT NOT TO STRUGGLE TENG TO DEATH (REFTELS A & B). THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE OF SCIENCE NEWS CONTAINS SOME SPECIFIC NOTES ON REFERENCES TO CRITICISM OF TENG IN ITS ARTICLES (AFP PEKING DECEMBER 12). NEVERTHELESS, RESUMPTION OF EVEN LIMITED CRITICISM AFTER ITS EARLIER ABANDONMENT INDICATES THAT THERE ARE STILL PEOPLE WHO WOULD PREFER TENG NOT TO RETURN TOO SOON.

3. THE CONSTANT PRAISE OF CHAIRMAN HUA AND THE PERSONAL ADULATION WHICH HAS GROWN UP AROUND HIM IN RECENT WEEKS SUGGESTS MORE THAN JUST AN ATTEMPT TO BUILD UP AN UNKNOWN FIGURE FOR THE CHINESE MASSES. ELEVATION OF HUA ABOVE THE PARTY CENTER AS THE EPITOME OF THE PROLETARIAN LEADER ALSO PUTS THOSE ARGUING FOR A SENIOR POST FOR TENG IN A DIFFICULT POSITION. SIMILARLY, THE PLA'S FREQUENT SUPPORT FOR THE NEW CHAIRMAN SUGGESTS AN EFFORT TO DEMONSTRATE THAT HUA IS THE MAN TO WHOM "EVERYONE" MUST BE LOYAL. REWRITING RECENT PARTY HISTORY -- INCLUDING HUA'S PRE-EMINENCE IN LAST YEAR'S TACHAI CONFERENCE -- AND THE ARGUMENT THAT OTHERS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR TENG'S PROGRAMS IN 1975 SUGGESTS THAT THERE COULD BE AN EFFORT TO DISSOCIATE TENG FROM POLICIES WHICH

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THE REGIME STILL DESIRES TO PROMOTE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PROVINCE, POLITICAL STABILITY, POLITICAL LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976HONGK14464
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760460-0154
From: HONG KONG
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761245/aaaabmyv.tel
Line Count: 109
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 HONG KONG 14025, 76 HONG KONG 13815, 76 HONG KONG 12453
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 APR 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <17 SEP 2004 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TENG'S RETURN CAUSING PROBLEMS?
TAGS: PINT, PINR, CH, (TENG HSIAO-PING)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006